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Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee's public hearing on S.B. No. 1011 - An Act
Concerning a Reorganization of Connecticut's System of Public Higher Education

We all understand that budget cuts are needed across the board. We know there's a deficit, we know that it needs to be addressed, and we know that the decision of where and how to make these cuts is extremely difficult.

That being said, it is also important to make note of the long term implications. This proposal is a very short term Band-Aid. In the long run, the effects are extremely detrimental, not only to students, but to Connecticut at large.

I believe that the goals of this proposal are in the right place- these goals include higher rates of retention and graduation, increased numbers of students graduating within the expected span of 4 years, and greater numbers of students graduating and working as prepared and qualified professionals in Connecticut. Please understand that these are our goals as well. In fact, we are not opposed to reorganization.

However, I do not believe that this current proposal on reorganization will serve these goals. The Board of Regents that will be developed will set certain standards and benchmarks for the Connecticut State Universities and community colleges to meet- standards that the students and faculty of the schools themselves will not be involved in setting. And if we do not meet these benchmarks that we are not involved in setting, we are at risk of losing another huge chunk of our budget to another constituent unit. Performance and outcome measures are important, but funding based on these measures is ineffective.

Combined with the additional budget cut of 10% that is being proposed, this will translate into fewer full time faculty members- meaning fewer classes offered, larger class sizes, the elimination of some of the smaller majors and programs, and less individualized attention, which is an incredible asset of the CSU's at present.

This means there will be no way for students to graduate within 4 years. It also means that students will not be as prepared or as qualified for the work force, nor will their degree be as valuable. Coupled with an increase in tuition, this will undoubtedly push prospective and current students elsewhere, probably out of state. And when they graduate they will work out of state, because that is the trend. Ultimately, Connecticut will lose money under this plan- fewer students will choose CSU's or CT community colleges and fewer graduates will be working in Connecticut.

It is a mistake to plan for Connecticut based on strategies developed in Minnesota. Connecticut is not Minnesota. We are all experiencing different versions of similar problems. But we are not the same. Our solutions should mirror that and should reflect our strengths and our assets. The quality of education that is offered and the level of skill that is acquired through our CSU's are our strengths and our assets. Therefore, we, as students and faculty of the CSU's and community colleges must be involved in this

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planning. Reorganization must reflect our needs and our identities in order to be effective. I urge you to
please reconsider this current proposal.